

National Survey on Drug Use and Health

# The NSDUH Report

December 16, 2005

## Illicit Drug Use among Persons Arrested for Serious Crimes

### In Brief

- Based on annual averages from the 2002, 2003, and 2004 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 1.2 million adults aged 18 or older were arrested for any serious violent or property offense in the past year
- Adults who were arrested in the past year for any serious offense were more likely to have used an illicit drug in the past year than those who were not arrested (60.1 vs. 13.6 percent)
- Of adults who had been arrested for serious offenses in the past year, 46.5 percent had used marijuana in the past year compared with 10.0 percent of those who had not been arrested for any serious offense

Data from the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program indicate that a high proportion of arrestees test positive for illicit drug use.<sup>1</sup> The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asks respondents aged 18 or older to report whether they were arrested and booked for various crimes in the past year. This report examines arrests for Part I violent and property offenses as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting Program.<sup>2</sup> Arrests for Part I violent offenses include arrests for murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault; arrests for Part I property offenses include arrests for burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. NSDUH also asks respondents to report on their use of illicit drugs during the past year. *Any illicit drug* refers to marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens (including MDMA, PCP, and LSD), heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically.<sup>3</sup>

This report presents the estimated number and percentage of adults aged 18 or older who were arrested in the past 12 months for Part I offenses by gender and age and compares rates of illicit drug use for those who had and had not been arrested. All findings presented in this report are annual averages based on combined 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUH data.

### Adults Arrested in the Past Year

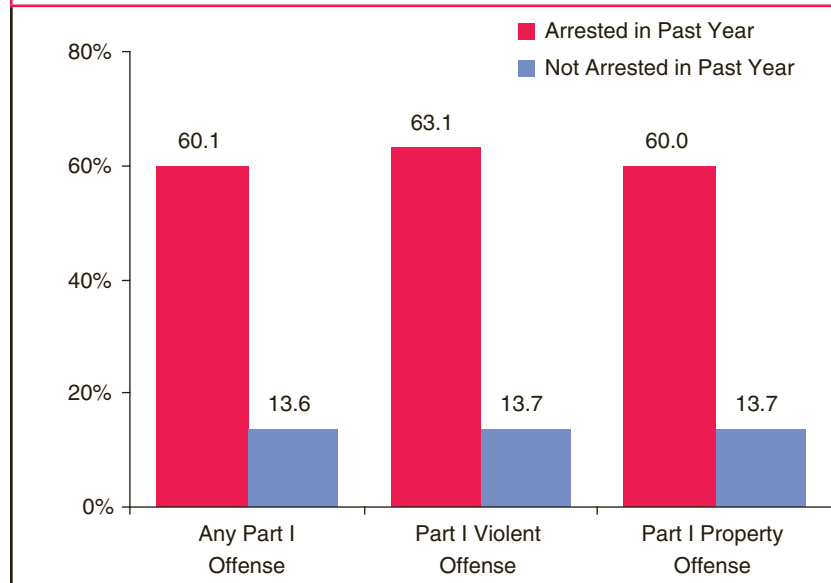
Based on annual averages from the 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUHs, an estimated 1.2 million adults aged 18 or older (0.6 percent) were arrested in the past year for any Part I offense.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 0.2 percent of adults (an estimated 527,000) were arrested for a Part I violent offense, and 0.4 percent (an estimated 772,000) were arrested for a Part I property offense.

Individuals aged 18 to 25 were more likely to have been arrested for any Part I offense, any Part I violent offense, and any Part I property offense in the past year than individuals aged 26 to 34 or those aged 35 or older (Table 1). Males were more likely than females to have been arrested for any Part I offense, any Part I violent offense, and any Part I property offense.

**Table 1. Percentages of Persons Aged 18 or Older Arrested in the Past Year for Part I Offenses, by Age and Gender: 2002, 2003, and 2004**

Gender and Age	Any Part I Offense	Any Part I Violent Offense	Any Part I Property Offense
<b>Total</b>	0.6	0.2	0.4
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 25 Years	1.8	0.7	1.3
26 to 34 Years	0.6	0.3	0.3
35 Years or Older	0.3	0.1	0.2
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	0.8	0.4	0.5
Female	0.3	0.1	0.2

**Figure 1. Percentages of Persons Aged 18 or Older Reporting Any Past Year Illicit Drug Use, by Whether They Were Arrested for Part I Offenses in the Past Year: 2002, 2003, and 2004**



### Past Year Arrestees and Illicit Drug Used

Adults who were arrested in the past year for any Part I offense were more likely to have used an illicit drug in the

past year than those who were not arrested (60.1 vs. 13.6 percent; Figure 1). Similar differences were found both for Part I violent offenses (63.1 vs. 13.7 percent) and Part I property offenses (60.0 vs. 13.7 percent).

December 16, 2005

NSDUH REPORT: ILLICIT DRUG USE AMONG PERSONS ARRESTED FOR SERIOUS CRIMES

**Table 2. Percentages of Persons Aged 18 or Older Reporting Past Year Illicit Drug Use, by Whether They Were Arrested for Any Part I Offense in the Past Year: 2002, 2003, and 2004**

Illicit Drug	Arrested for Any Part I Offense (Percent)	Not Arrested for Any Part I Offense (Percent)
Marijuana	46.5	10.0
Cocaine	24.8	2.4
Crack Cocaine	11.8	0.6
Hallucinogens	11.0	1.5
Methamphetamines	6.5	0.5
Heroin	4.3	0.1
Nonmedical Use of Any Prescription-Type Drug	28.8	5.7

### Past Year Arrestees and Type of Illicit Drug Used

Of adults who had been arrested for any Part I offense in the past year, 46.5 percent had used marijuana in the past year compared with 10.0 percent of those who had not been arrested for any Part I offense (Table 2). Individuals who had been arrested for Part I offenses in the past year also were more likely than those not arrested for Part I offenses to have used cocaine, crack cocaine, hallucinogens, methamphetamines, heroin, and prescription drugs nonmedically.

### Number of Arrests and Illicit Drug Use

NSDUH includes a question on the total number of arrests in the past year (including arrests for both Part I and other offenses). Among adults arrested for any Part I offense in the past year, 63.9 percent were arrested one time for either a Part I or other offense, and 36.1 percent were arrested two or more times. Part I arrestees who were arrested two or more times were more likely to have used an illicit drug in the past year than Part I arrestees who were arrested only once (69.8 vs. 55.2 percent).

### End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> National Institute of Justice. (2003, April). *2000 Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring: Annual report* (NCJ 193013). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. [Available as a PDF at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/193013.pdf>]
- <sup>2</sup> The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program separates crimes into two major categories: Part I and Part II offenses. Part I offenses include criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part II offenses include all other reportable classifications outside those defined as Part I offenses (e.g., fraud, vandalism, drunkenness, vagrancy). See the FBI's 2004 *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook* (revised) (Clarksburg, WV: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program; available at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#cius>).
- <sup>3</sup> Nonmedical use is defined as use of prescription-type drugs not prescribed for the respondent by a physician or used only for the experience or feeling they caused. Nonmedical use of any prescription-type pain reliever, sedative, stimulant, or tranquilizer does not include over-the-counter drugs.
- <sup>4</sup> When considering the data presented here, it is important to understand the methodological differences between NSDUH and the Uniform Crime Report (UCR). In the UCR, one arrest is counted for each separate instance in which an individual is arrested, cited, or summoned for criminal acts. One person may be arrested multiple times during the year; as a result, data from the UCR represent the number of arrests in the past year rather than the number of individuals arrested. UCR counts of arrest are conservative because reporting is voluntary and incomplete (i.e., some large jurisdictions were not included in 2004). NSDUH data represent the number of individuals arrested. In addition, NSDUH would not capture data from past year arrestees who were convicted and incarcerated since the time of their arrest, resulting in an undercount of persons arrested. According to the 2004 UCR, among adults aged 18 or older, there were 1,224,257 arrests for Part I offenses, including 358,395 arrests for Part I violent offenses and 865,862 arrests for Part I property offenses. See Table 38 in the FBI's 2005 *Crime in the United States: 2004 Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice; available as a PDF at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#cius>).

### Figure/Table Note

Source: SAMHSA, 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUH.

Research findings from the SAMHSA 2002, 2003, and 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

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The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Prior to 2002, this survey was called the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). The 2002, 2003, and 2004 data are based on information obtained from 135,059 persons aged 18 or older. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

*The NSDUH Report* is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on the NSDUH surveys used in compiling data for this issue is available in the following publications:

Office of Applied Studies. (2005). *Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-4062, NSDUH Series H-28). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2004). *Results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 04-3964, NSDUH Series H-25). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2003). *Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 03-3836, NSDUH Series H-22). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available online: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>

Because of improvements and modifications to the 2002 NSDUH, estimates from the 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys should not be compared with estimates from the 2001 or earlier versions of the survey to examine changes over time.



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